

March 6, 2022

The Journey Back, 1

Introduction to the book of James

James 1:1

Authorship

The New Testament mentions several men by the name of James.

James, the son of Alphaeus or Clopas (Cleopas)— Mark 15:40; Luke 24:13-18; John 19:25.

James the son of _____ – Acts 12:1-2

James the brother of _____ – Matthew 13:55; Galatians 2:9

“servant” –

doulos – One who is subservient to another. Occasionally a bondservant chose to voluntarily place himself under the authority of a wealthier person in return for financial benefit and protection.

Authenticity

A Jewish readership would have no problem with writings of a servant of God. But James used the clearest title in the New Testament to align himself with the deity of Christ.

The _____ (*Kurios*), the exalted one, lord, master,
_____ (*Yeshua* the human name given to him at his birth)
_____ (*Xristos*) the Messiah—the Anointed One.

Audience

Here we see the intended recipients of James’ letter.

Scattering is a theme in the Bible—just like seeds that are lifted by the wind and scattered—God’s people have been scattered by the winds of persecution.

“Greetings”

In the New Testament this word is found only here and in the letter from the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:23) to Gentile believers, written under the direction of James, the brother of Jesus.

The Greek word is *chairein*, which is related to the word for joy (*charan*) which we will see in the next verses.

The scattering of believers that James references in the introduction to his letter speaks to the reality of suffering for God's people.

The idea of suffering is found throughout the _____.

All suffering has its roots in sinful _____.

The words and example of Jesus:

John 16:33 & Hebrews 4:15

Table Talk

James 1:1 (ESV)

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes in the Dispersion:

Greetings.

1. James referred to himself as a servant. How does seeing yourself as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ affect the daily choices you make? If it isn't affecting your choices how *should* it affect your decisions today?
2. James wrote to the "twelve tribes (of Israel) in the Dispersion," to Jewish believers who were exiled from their homeland for various reasons, mainly persecution. With all the wars in the Middle East and the most recent invasion of Ukraine by Russia, millions of people are being scattered. How should we embrace those who are being ripped from their homes and families?
3. How important do you think it was for James to greet these scattered believers? What difference does it make when you notice that someone is hurting and voice it to him or her?
4. Think about the suffering you have experienced or are going through at this moment. If you can identify a cause, why not surrender that to God? If confession is required, do you have someone to whom you need to confess or ask forgiveness besides God?
5. Perhaps your suffering has no known cause. Good people really do suffer, and life is not fair. How can you embrace God in your present suffering when it feels undeserved? How would you counsel a friend or child who is going through seemingly undeserved suffering?
6. What hope do the words and example of Jesus (John 16:33 & Hebrews 4:15) give to you?